

create authority for multi-medical center NPCs to be shared among a number of medical centers. Condensing numerous NPCs into one would retain the local affiliations that make them valuable and effective, but would achieve greater efficiency and economy of scale by combining administrative resources.

The legislation would make additional adjustments in other areas. It would expand VA's oversight capability. It would clarify existing authority for NPCs to transfer funds among medical centers, and it would clarify reimbursement processes. It would also modify the required composition of NPC governance boards, to allow individuals with a wider range of expertise to serve.

I believe these proposed changes would facilitate better working relationships between NPCs and VA, thereby achieving better support of VA research and education. I am confident that these provisions will make an effective source of support for VA even stronger.

#### SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

##### SENATE RESOLUTION 534—DESIGNATING THE MONTH OF MAY 2008 AS "NATIONAL DRUG COURT MONTH"

Mr. BIDEN (for himself, Mr. LEVIN, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. KOHL, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. CASEY, and Mr. JOHNSON) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 534

Whereas drug courts provide focus and leadership for community-wide partnerships, bringing together public safety and public health professionals in the fight against drug abuse and criminality;

Whereas 60 percent to 80 percent of drug offenders sentenced to prison and over 40 percent sentenced to probation recidivate, and whereas fewer than 17 percent of drug court graduates recidivate;

Whereas the results of more than 100 program evaluations and at least 3 experimental studies have yielded evidence that drug courts greatly improve substance abuse treatment outcomes, substantially reduce crime, and produce significant societal benefits;

Whereas drug courts transform over 120,000 addicts each year in the adult, juvenile, and family court systems into drug-free, productive citizens;

Whereas judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, substance abuse treatment and rehabilitation professionals, law enforcement and community supervision personnel, researchers and educators, national and community leaders, and others dedicated to drug courts and similar types of treatment programs are healing families and communities across the country; and

Whereas the drug court movement has grown from the 12 original drug courts in 1994 to over 2,000 operational drug courts as of December 2007: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate—

(1) designates the month of May 2008 as "National Drug Court Month";

(2) encourages the people of the United States and interested groups to observe the month with appropriate ceremonies and activities;

(3) encourages leaders across the United States to increase the use of drug courts by instituting sustainable drug courts and other treatment-based alternatives to prison in all 3,143 counties in the United States, which serve the vast majority of the highest-need citizens in the justice system; and

(4) supports the goal of robustly funding the Drug Court Discretionary Grant Program and other treatment-based alternatives to prison in order to expand these critical criminal justice programs.

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, today I rise to introduce a resolution marking May 2008 as National Drug Court Month. The more than 2,000 drug courts that currently operate across the country are critical to curbing drug use, reducing recidivism, and turning non-violent prisoners into law abiding and productive members of our society.

Drug courts closely supervise non-violent drug offenders as they address their addiction or substance abuse problem. When they graduate from the program they are clean, sober and better prepared to participate productively in society. In order to graduate from most drug court programs, participants are required to finish high school or obtain a GED, hold down a job, as well as maintain financial obligations including drug court fees and child support payments. A sponsor is also required to help ensure they stay on track.

In 1994, I wrote the law that created the drug courts program because we believed that the programs they oversee were cost-effective, innovative alternatives to prison that would reduce crime and deal with non-violent offenders who are in desperate need of treatment. It turns out we were right. A 2005 report from the Government Accountability Office found that drug court program participants were less likely to be rearrested or reconvicted than those who did not participate in drug court programs. The report also concluded that a conservative estimate of the net benefits to society of sending a non-violent offender through drug court program ranges from about \$1,000 per participant to about \$15,000. There is just no question that these alternative to prison programs not only work, but also make great financial sense.

Treating non-violent offenders through drug court-monitored programs and other alternatives to prison treatment programs provides them with an opportunity to turn away from drugs and to get on the path to be healthy, contributing members of society. It also helps to reduce America's exploding prison population: more than 2.3 million people are in prisons and jails across the U.S.; 1 in 100 adults in the United States are behind bars. It costs an average of nearly \$24,000 to imprison an individual. Drug courts can reduce the financial burden on State and local budgets.

I hope that National Drug Court Month raises awareness about the im-

portance of drug courts and other alternatives to prison treatment-based programs. I ask my colleagues to join me in commending these programs and urging state, local and Federal officials to help expand and robustly fund these treatment programs throughout the country.

##### SENATE RESOLUTION 535—RECOGNIZING APRIL 28, 2008, AS "NATIONAL HEALTHY SCHOOLS DAY"

Mr. REID (for Mrs. CLINTON (for herself, Mr. KERRY, Mr. BAYH, Mr. FEINGOLD, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. SANDERS, and Mr. CASEY)) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 535

Whereas over half of schools in the United States have problems linked to indoor air quality;

Whereas children are more vulnerable to environmental hazards as they breathe in more air per pound of body weight due to their developing systems;

Whereas children spend an average of 30 to 50 hours per week in school;

Whereas poor indoor environmental quality is associated with a wide range of problems that include poor concentration, respiratory illnesses, learning difficulties, and cancer;

Whereas research suggests that children attending schools in poor condition score 11 percent lower on standardized tests than students who attend schools in good condition;

Whereas an average of 1 out of every 13 school-age children has asthma, the leading cause of school absenteeism, accounting for approximately 14,700,000 missed school days each year;

Whereas 17 separate studies all found positive health impacts from improved indoor air-quality, ranging from 13.5 percent up to 87 percent improvement;

Whereas our Nation's schools spent approximately \$8,000,000,000 on energy costs in the last school year, causing officials to make very difficult decisions on cutting back much needed academic programs in efforts to maintain heat and electricity;

Whereas healthy and high performance schools designed to reduce energy and maintenance costs, provide cleaner air, improve lighting, and reduce exposures to toxic substances provide a healthier and safer learning environment for children and improved academic achievement and well-being;

Whereas green and healthy schools save on average \$100,000 per year on energy costs, enough to hire 2 teachers, buy 200 new computers, or purchase 5,000 new textbooks;

Whereas converting all the Nation's schools to green schools would reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 33,200,000 metric tons;

Whereas Congress has demonstrated its interest in this compelling issue by including the Healthy High-Performance Schools Program in the No Child Left Behind Act and the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007; and

Whereas our schools have the great responsibility of guiding the future of our children and our Nation: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate recognizes April 28, 2008, as "National Healthy Schools Day".

Mrs. CLINTON. Mr. President, today is National Healthy Schools Day—established to build awareness and promote healthy school environments for our children and school personnel.